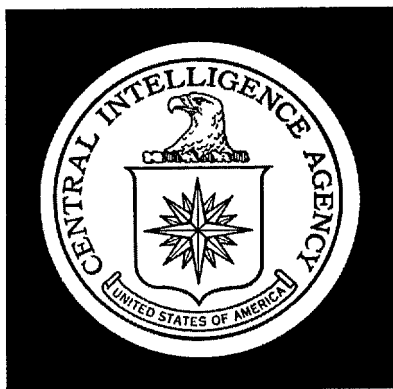


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Philippines: Domestic political difficulties and external events are leading President Marcos to modify his country's role in Vietnam.

Appropriations for the Philippine civic action contingent in Vietnam have been stalled in the Senate where Marcos' opponents and those opposed to aid to Vietnam have seized on the measure as the vehicle for a power play against him.

Marcos' ability to force Senate passage of the appropriations bill has been weakened by the furor attending recent disclosures of Philippine plotting against Malaysian Borneo. In addition, various senators and even Marcos himself have interpreted recent moves toward talks as lessening the need for a continued Philippine presence in Vietnam.

Marcos now appears willing to accept a program which would substitute medical personnel for some of the Filipino military engineers currently in Vietnam, even though South Vietnam has impressed on Manila that its priority need is for engineers. Congressional action cannot take place until after the Easter recess.

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NOTES

Lebanon: The moderate right-wing Christian leadership scored a noteworthy victory in the recent parliamentary elections. The opposition to pro-Egyptian former president Shihab now commands a majority in the new parliament scheduled to convene on 3 May and may promote a foreign policy less pro-Egyptian than that of the last ten years. Despite some pro-Shihab interference by the army during the elections, it is unlikely that the army will carry out previous threats to intervene openly in the government at this time. [REDACTED]

Chile-USSR: President Frei has accepted an invitation to visit the USSR. No date has been announced. The trip might be combined with visits to other countries. Frei probably would be able to get the constitutionally required permission for this trip from the Senate, which is controlled by a predominantly leftist opposition and which vetoed his proposed trip to the United States last year. [REDACTED]

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